

FINAL MINUTES

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

August 7, 2013

Town Hall Commission Room

A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was held on August 7, 2013 in the Weston Town Hall Commission Room. Present were Woody Bliss, Dennis Brooks, Nina Daniel, Arne de Keijzer (by phone), Kenneth Edgar, Michael O'Brien and John Stripp.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

The Commission first heard from First Selectman Gayle Weinstein, who had proposed an additional change to the Charter pertaining to the First Selectman's ability to hire and discharge Town employees below the level of Department Head. First Selectman Weinstein explained to the Commission that the current Charter provision (Section 5.1(c)) could result in the Board of Selectmen "micro-managing" the hiring and firing process. In her view adequate constraints on the First Selectman's ability to hire and dismiss such employees already existed, between the relevant collective bargaining agreements and the Town's budgeting process, and the additional Charter requirement that the Board of Selectmen pre-approve such hires was unnecessary. She suggested that, in the case of a dismissal, the additional approval of the Town Administrator would be adequate.

The Commission then resumed its discussion of Charter provisions relating to the Annual Town Budget Meeting ("ATBM"), most especially the requirement that there be at least two percent of the Town's "Qualified Voters" in attendance in order for the proposed budget amounts be reduced. Commissioner Daniel read into the record her views on the quorum issue, and this submission is attached as Exhibit A. Commissioner Bliss referred the Commission to his written views on this issue and related issues, and his statement is attached as Exhibit B. Commissioner Edgar similarly referred to his written views on this issue, and these are attached as Exhibit C. Finally, Commissioner Brooks went over with the Commission statistical evidence regarding attendance at the ATBM over the past 11 years. This data is attached as Exhibit D.

After extended discussion, and input on this issue from members of the public, namely Susan Moch, Harvey Bellin and Margaret Wirtenberg, as well as First Selectman Weinstein, the sense of a majority of Commission members was that continuation of the quorum requirement was appropriate, and that a two percent quorum requirement was appropriate. Three Commissioners, however (Messrs.

Bliss and Stripp and Ms. Daniel), had the sense that the quorum requirement should be eliminated or that, alternatively, the quorum should be reduced to 50 voters.

The Commission did feel that additional clarifications to the quorum requirement should be made. First, the two percent should be calculated based on the number of "Resident Electors" (i.e. registered voters) in Town, as opposed to the number of "Qualified Voters," a term that includes certain property holders, and which is more difficult to ascertain at any given moment. Second, the two percent calculation should be made as of the close of business on the last business day prior to the ATBM.

The Commission then took up First Selectman Weinstein's proposed change to the Charter, discussed above. After discussion, the Commission was satisfied that the current Charter provisions adequately address the issue and was not inclined to adopt further changes to address this issue.

The Commission then considered a suggestion that vacancies in appointed Boards and Commissions must be filled by either members of the party that had recommended the departed Board or Commission member, or by an unaffiliated person. The Commission was not inclined to adopt this change.

The Commission unanimously adopted the proposed minutes from its June 14 and June 27 meetings without any changes.

Finally, the Commission considered its remaining schedule of meetings, and concluded that it would meet on the following dates:

- August 14 – Special Meeting
- August 21 – Special Meeting
- August 28 – Public Hearing
- September 6 – Special Meeting
- September 11 – Special Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 10:02 PM.

Kenneth C. Edgar, Jr., Co- Chair